

Midvale Bridge
Bridge Street spanning Weiser River
Midvale
Washington County
Idaho

HAER No. ID-14

HAER

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44-MIDVA,

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service, Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94102

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

MIDVALE BRIDGE

HAER No. ID-14

Location: Bridge Street spanning Weiser River, Midvale
Washington County
Idaho
USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle, Midvale, Idaho
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates
Zone 11, Northing 4923990, Easting 521390

Date of Construction: 1911 - Deck has been replaced several times.

Builder: J. H. Forbes Company, Caldwell, Idaho

Present Owner: Washington County
Courthouse
Weiser, Idaho 83672

Present Use: Vehicular and Pedestrian Traffic
To be demolished upon completion of replacement
bridge after 1990

Significance: The most substantial bridge by J. H. Forbes
in the area. It was important in the early
development of the community. The bridge
was determined eligible for the National
Register of Historic Places in 1982.

Historian: Rebecca Herbst (National Park Service)

Report Prepared By: Ronald M. Blakley
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621 South 4th Avenue
Caldwell, Idaho 83605

Date: August 1986

MIDVALE BRIDGE

Midvale Bridge is located in the City of Midvale, Washington County, Idaho. Midvale is the center of a small rural community with commercial establishments, churches, and schools to serve the city and the surrounding community of farms and ranches.

The immediate valley floor on each side of the Weiser River consists of gently rolling terrain which is used for agricultural purposes irrigated by water from the river and from ground water wells. The major crops are alfalfa hay and small grains and pasture. The surrounding foothills are typically grasslands used for grazing and cattle production with most crops being produced by dry land farming or with water from small creeks in the narrow valley floor.

The City of Midvale serves as a commercial hub for this mountain valley community and is situated on both banks of the Weiser River linked by the Midvale Bridge. The commercial establishments are on the west bank of the river, while the schools are on the east bank. The residential community is located on both banks.

The Bridge spans the Weiser River in the approximate center of the City of Midvale and provides access for the surrounding farms and ranches to the railroad which traverses the Weiser River through Midvale.

There are two other bridges across the Weiser River between Midvale and the City of Cambridge which is approximately eight miles upstream from Midvale. However, all the bridges are posted with a restricted loading and the Midvale Bridge is the most substantial for carrying heavily loaded farm vehicles.

This bridge replaced a timber bridge which had previously replaced a ferry at this location. The construction of this steel truss bridge coincides with the period of rapid growth in the local community and in the region. In June of 1911, the Board of Commissioners for Washington County awarded a contract in the amount of \$11,495 to the J. H. Forbes Company for construction of the present steel truss bridge.

The bridge is a Pratt overhead steel truss bridge consisting of two spans which total 252 feet in length. The supporting structure consists of concrete headwalls at each bank with a concrete center pier in the approximate center of the channel. The timber deck is supported by timber stringers which are in turn supported by steel cross beams carried by the steel trusses. The upper cords of the trusses are lace channels with cover plates and

the lower chords are eye bars, verticals are lace channels and diagonals are flat eye bars and square eye bars with turnbuckles. All connections are pinned. The bridge also consists of a five-foot plank walkway along the upstream side. The bridge is provided with latticework guardrails.

The deck of the bridge is 10 to 12 feet above the river channel. It is situated in a relatively narrow reach of the river channel and flood waters periodically extend out of the channel and flow through the westerly side of the City, bypassing the bridge. Floods are ordinarily the result of ice jamming in the river channel forming a temporary dam which raises the upstream water level above the banks of the river channel.

The two-span steel truss structure was used because it was the most economical method of achieving the structural capacity desired for this crossing and spans the river channel with the least amount of obstructions in the channel. Although the present carrying capacity of the bridge is below the standards required for today's traffic, this bridge was much stronger than any other bridge in the area when it was built.

The J. H. Forbes Company constructed numerous steel bridges in the State during that time in history. The Midvale Bridge is significant as one of the most substantial bridges erected by J. H. Forbes, Idaho's first major bridge contractor. The structure is also locally significant as it is associated with the period of Midvale's burgeoning development and contributes to the historical character of the community.

REFERENCES

- Bridge Plate J. H. Forbes Company
Washington County Commissioners' Minutes of June 2, 1911
Herbst, Rebecca, Idaho Bridge Inventory, Volume I, History:
Idaho Transportation Department 1985
Yongue, Gerald W., Roots of Middle Valley, McCall, Idaho:
Mountain Graphics, 1980, pp: 21-22

STATE OF IDAHO

0 5 10 20 30 40 50
SCALE IN MILES

WASHINGTON

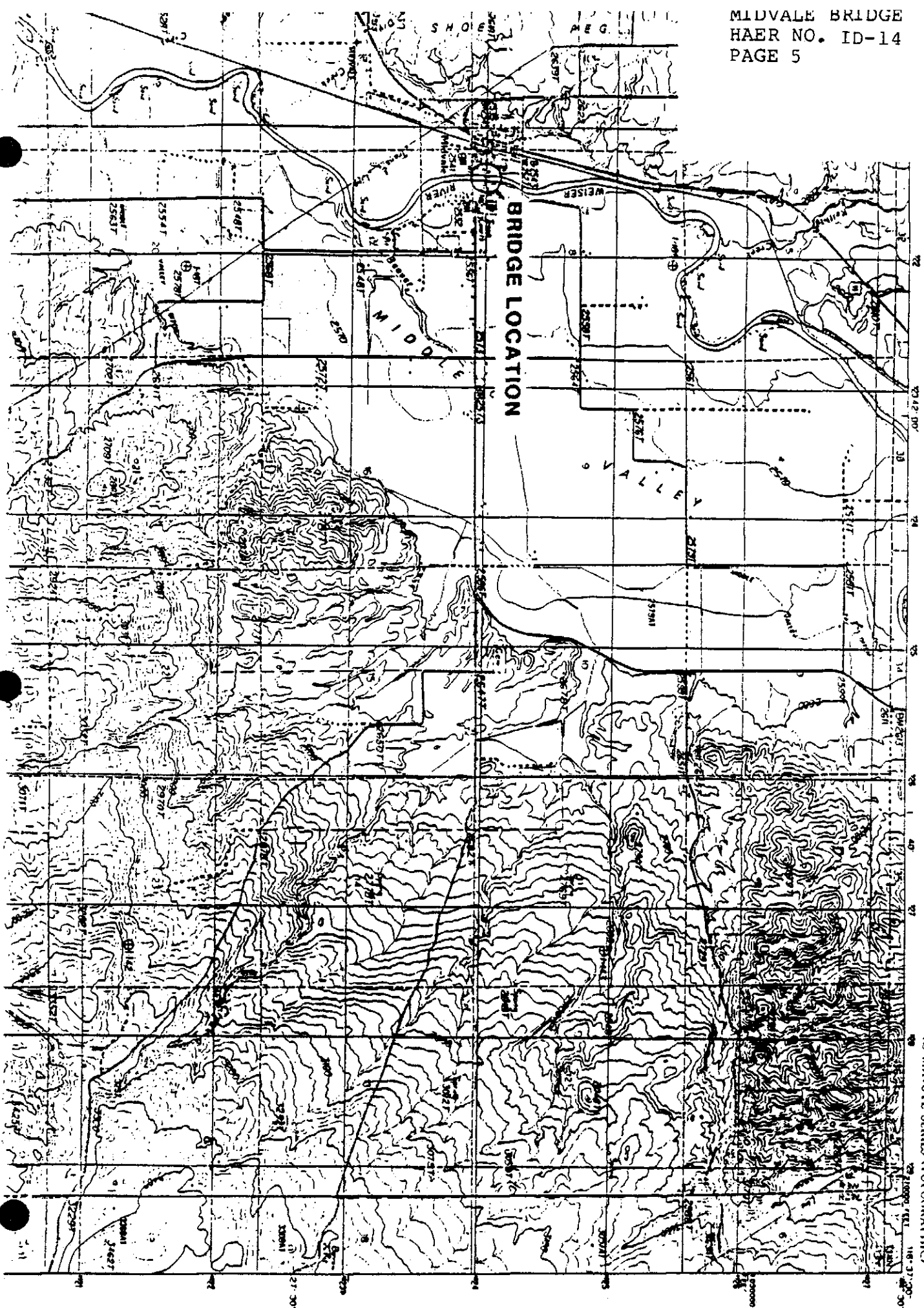
OREGON



NEVADA

UTAH

WYOMING



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PHOTO KEY MAP
MIDVALE BRIDGE
RS 3878(2)

SCALE: 1" = 40'

